

## **20 Steps to Appropriate Services**

*by Reed Martin, J.D.*

1. Get everything in writing, especially prior written notice from the school.
2. Review your child's records.
3. Review last year's performance both according to the school as it is documented in their records and as you believe it to be.
4. Review current evaluations and determine if you need new, or independent, evaluations before the IEP meeting.
5. Let the school know in writing anything you want changed for next year.
6. Determine, based on your child's needs, who should be at the IEP meeting from the school and make sure each will be there.
7. Object in writing to any meeting procedures that have existed in the past that discouraged your full participation (e.g. Inadequate notice, too little time). Do not waive any of these objections.
8. Begin the meeting by reviewing the last year and describing any problems your child has that interfere with the school's ability to confer benefit.
9. Set goals in each problem area (reasonable expectations for a year's growth appropriate to your child's learning capacity).
10. For each annual goal, set short-term objectives that, if accomplished, will lead to the annual goal (and if not accomplished, will indicate the program is headed in the wrong direction).
11. For each short-term and long-term objective, set the evaluation criteria and schedule (and remember the parent is to be involved in assessing effectiveness, not just the school).
12. Develop the plan to meet those goals and ask if it is reasonably calculated to confer benefit.
13. Determine the related services needed to carry out the plan, settling the frequency and duration of the service, the skill level of the personnel, and if the service will be provided in a group or individually.
14. List the resources that must be allocated so that there is a realistic chance the child will benefit.
15. Examine any contingencies that need planning (e.g. How disciplinary sanctions will be dealt with; how and when you will decide if there should be an extension of services over the summer months).
16. Determine the placement where the plan will be carried out.
17. Remove any unnecessary elements of restrictiveness in that placement.
18. Plan transition services that will relate this year's plan to the eventual termination of special education services.
19. Monitor progress and keep a log.
20. Be prepared for next year's IEP or if needed mid year, request a new IEP.